

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SWF-01 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

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AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, EEC, UK

SUBJECT: CALLAGHAN SAYS LEAVING EC WOULD BE "TRAUMATIC"
FOR UK

1. IN A TELEVISION INTERVIEW ON NOVEMBER 21, FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN MADE SOME REMARKS ABOUT BRITISH MEMBERSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY THAT WERE LESS "AGNOSTIC" THAN HIS USUAL STATEMENTS ON THIS SUBJECT. HE ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT CONSIDER ITSELF BOUND BY A LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE VOTE ON RENEGOTIATION.

2. DURING A GENERAL DISCUSSION OF BRITAIN'S GLOOMY ECONOMIC SITUATION, CALLAGHAN SAID: "WE ARE NOW SO
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ENMESHED IN THE MARKET THAT COMING OUT WILL BE QUITE A

TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE." IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO REBUILD THE UK'S COMMONWEALTH TRADING LINKS, HE SAID. "COMING OUT OF THE MARKET WOULD BE A VERY DIFFERENT THING FROM NOT GOING IN."

3. WHEN ASKED WHETHER HE WAS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT EC RENEGOTIATION, CALLAGHAN SAID THAT IT WAS TOO EARLY TO SAY. HE MADE IT CLEAR. THAT A VOTE BY A PARTY CONFERENCE ON RENEGOTIATION WOULD NOT BE BINDING. "THE GOVERNMENT HAS TO REACH ITS OWN CONCLUSIONS ON THIS. NO PARTY CONFERENCE CAN BIND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DAY ON WHAT IT REGARDS AS THE NATIONAL INTEREST."

4. COMMENT: CALLAGHAN'S COMMENTS SUPPORT THE HYPOTHESIS, ADVANCED REGULARLY BY FCO OFFICIALS, THAT THE FOREIGN SECRETARY WILL COME DOWN SQUARELY IN FAVOR OF CONTINUED EC MEMBERSHIP ONCE RENEGOTIATION HAS BEEN SATISFACTORILY COMPLETED. IT IS FAR TOO EARLY TO MAKE A CONCLUSIVE PREDICTION, HOWEVER. THE REMARK ABOUT THE PARTY CONFERENCE IS BOTH A REITERATION OF A SIMPLE CONSTITUTIONAL TRUTH AND AN ATTEMPT TO KEEP THE GOVERNMENT'S OPTIONS AS OPEN AS POSSIBLE.

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Message Attributes

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